



# QUARTERLY NEWS

## OPEN HOUSE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE SIMS ANNOUNCES INCENTIVES FOR BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS AND AWARDS ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

**F**ree consultations and fee discounts for builders and developers using sustainable development techniques were some of the incentives announced by King County Executive Ron Sims during a DDES open house on sustainable development held June 22, 2005. Sustainable development incorporates components such as green roofs, alternative energy systems, recycled materials or reduced impervious surfaces for improved drainage.

### NEW INCENTIVES

During the open house, which was extremely well attended, Executive Sims announced a series of incentives for builders and developers designed to encourage use of green building and Low Impact Development techniques in unincorporated King County. The incentives, administered by King County Departments of Development and



King County Executive Ron Sims presents Sam Anderson and Robin Rogers of the Master Builders Association with an Earth Hero award. The MBA was recognized for partnering with King County to develop the Built Green Program.

Environmental Services (DDES) and Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP), are intended to encourage builders and developers to design projects engineered in ways most friendly to the environment.

The new incentives include:

**Dedicated Green Track at DDES for green building and Low Impact Development projects.** Building and development proposals in this track are assigned to a *Green Team*, composed of selected King County staff with expertise in alternative green design and construction techniques and in Built Green™ and LEED™

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## OPEN HOUSE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, CONTINUED

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programs. The *Green Team* will offer assistance to DDES customers during the permit review process on sustainable development techniques.

**No-Cost DDES Project Management for residential permit applications achieving a Built Green™ five star rating.** The DDES Project Manager provides customers with a single point of contact during the permit review process, enhancing service levels, efficiency and predictability for the customer. For more information on the Built Green™ Program, log on to: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/topics/sustainable-building>.

**Free green building technical consulting services on Tuesday mornings.** This service is offered weekdays from 8:30 a.m. -10:30 a.m. in the DDES Permit Center, or by appointment by contacting the King County Green Building program at 206-263-6037, or [katie.spataro@metrokc.gov](mailto:katie.spataro@metrokc.gov). Driving directions to DDES are available on the DDES Web site at: [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes).

**No-cost Low Impact Development consulting services.** To schedule an appointment, contact DNRP's Katie Spataro for Built Green, or Steve Foley for Low Impact Development at 206-263-6571.

- Cost-sharing and fee discounts for use of Low Impact Development best management practices (BMPs).
  - Cost sharing is available for building sites that convert existing impervious surfaces to native-vegetated landscape, compost amended lawn or grass surface, or modular-grid pavement.
  - Surface water fee discounts are available for both residential and commercial sites that incorporate best management practices, use pervious pavement, or install stormwater flow control or water quality treatment facilities.

More information on cost-sharing and fee discounts is available on the King County DNRP Web site: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/surface-water-mgt-fee/swm-discount.htm>.

### RECOGNIZING INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

The June 22, 2005 open house at DDES also included an *Earth Hero* Awards ceremony. Executive Sims gave *Earth Hero* awards to several projects built in unincorporated King County with green building and/or Low Impact Development components. The award winners included:

#### RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (TRACT HOMES)

- **Camwest**, for the Shamrock development east of Renton, which incorporates low impact development design; and
- **Quadrant Homes**, for incorporating green building standards into all new construction.

#### CUSTOM SINGLE FAMILY CONSTRUCTION

- **Jim and Susan Sproull** for the green vegetated roof on their Juanita garage.

#### COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Seattle Public Utilities** for the Cedar River Watershed Conference Center; and
- **Green River Community College** for the new Technology Center.

#### SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

- **The Master Builders of King and Snohomish Counties** for partnering with King County to establish the Built Green™ Program; and
- **Living Shelter Design Architects** in Issaquah for specializing in green design features and designing several projects recently permitted in unincorporated King County.

Customers can access information on green building practices and Low Impact Development via the DDES Web page at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes). Simply click on HOT TOPICS.

**For additional information, please contact Paula Adams, DDES Communications Director at 206-296-6682.**

## DDES ANNOUNCES FEE AMNESTY PROGRAM FOR UNPERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

**E**ffective July 15, 2005, DDES began offering a 6-month fee amnesty program whereby property owners with illegal construction or grading activity can retroactively engage the permit review process at DDES and still pay the standard permit fees. Title 27 of the King County Code authorizes DDES to double permit fees charged for construction, clearing or grading activity conducted without permits in the unincorporated area. The DDES Fee Amnesty Program is effective until December 31, 2005. **To be eligible for the program, the unpermitted activity must have occurred prior to July 15, 2005 and a complete permit application must be filed with DDES by December 31, 2005.**

The intent of the amnesty program is to protect public health, homeowner safety and the environment by encouraging property owners to complete the permit process, thus ensuring that construction and grading activity meets acceptable standards. There has been extensive media coverage on deck collapses resulting in injury and even death after the original structure was built without permits. Similarly, structures built in areas susceptible to heavy snows are required to sustain specific snow loads in order to prevent collapse. A more common example of unpermitted activity is a garage illegally converted into living space. In addition to structural considerations, this can create burdens for which an associated septic system was never designed, leading to failure.

In some instances, property owners may have unknowingly purchased property with unpermitted improvements.

The permits for such work may be required by financial institutions in order to process a loan or refinance a property.

Property owners securing permits after activity has occurred are still required to comply with all provisions of King County development regulations, e.g. clearing and grading, critical areas, building and fire codes, and Health Department regulations for septic and well designs. In rare cases, due to extreme divergence from code, illegal construction, clearing and grading cannot be permitted. Under this scenario, site restoration would be required.

### IF YOU KNOW YOU HAVE ILLEGAL DEVELOPMENT:

Property owners who know that construction has occurred on their property without permits should contact the DDES Permit Center at 206-296-6600 to inquire about the permit application process (this scenario is known as already-built-construction, or an ABC permit). Property owners wanting to address illegal clearing or grading on their property should contact the DDES Site Development Services section at 206-296-6759.

Permit Application materials for ABC Permits are available on the **DDES Web site at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes)**. Simply click on PERMIT INFORMATION, then on PERMIT APPLICATION FORMS, then on LISTING BY APPLICATION PACKET. The materials packet will explain the required steps and review process for ABC permits.

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## WELCOME TO THE DDES RECORDS CENTER



Ruby Herron of the DDES Records Center retrieving historical permit information stored on a CD.

**T**he DDES Records Center offers customers the ability to research building and land use permits which have been finalized or closed in unincorporated King County. (If property is annexed or incorporated by a city, the DDES Record Center will still hold permit files finalized/closed prior to the annexation or incorporation date.) In most cases, Records Center staff can retrieve the DDES file you are looking for within one business day. Very often, we can serve you while you wait. The Records Center is located in the main DDES facility in Renton and is open daily from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Driving directions are available on line at: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/ddes-map.htm>. **If you would like to speak with Records Center staff about your research project before driving to Renton, simply call 206-296-6696.**

Anytime customers come in to view a file, they may look

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## DDES ANNOUNCES FEE AMNESTY PROGRAM FOR UNPERMITTED DEVELOPMENT, CONTINUED

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**IF YOU ARE UNSURE IF A STRUCTURE ON YOUR PROPERTY WAS PERMITTED:** Property owners often contact DDES when they are unsure if a structure or improvement on newly purchased property has been properly permitted. A number of resources are available to assist property owners in their research: First, the **DDES Web site at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes)** offers a property research tool which links to the King County Assessor's records. Property owners can look at their property description to see if the County's square footage records match what actually exists in the home. From the main DDES Web site at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes), simply click on PROPERTY RESEARCH, then on GIS PROPERTY SEARCH (PARCEL LOCATOR). This same research tool

will also link customers to a permit history on each parcel in unincorporated King County, going back as far as 1995. If a property owner suspects their property might have illegal development established before 1995, DDES Permit Center staff at 206-296-6600 can easily look up the parcel's entire permit history. DDES Records Center staff at 206-296-6696 are also available to assist with this research (see article on page 3.)

**As noted above, the DDES Fee Amnesty Program for unpermitted construction and grading will remain in effect until December 31, 2005. For additional information, please contact Lisa Walker, 206-296-7086 in the DDES Permit Center or Chris Ricketts, Permit Center Supervisor at 206-296-6750.**

## WELCOME TO THE DDES RECORDS CENTER, CONTINUED

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at the material free of charge. DDES charges 15 cents per page for any requested copies, and Records Center staff can facilitate any copying requested by a customer. Copying charges may be higher for certified copies and documents larger than legal-size.

Outlined below are the types of records that can be accessed through the DDES Records Center and the approximate historical availability of files.

### BUILDING PERMITS

**RESIDENTIAL:** The DDES Records Center can access residential building permits back to approximately 1970. Some related architectural drawings/building plans may also be available back to 1987. Homeowners looking to reproduce building plans that are not available at DDES need to hire a private architect to develop new drawings.

In addition to records for new residences, permits and some of the related plans are available back to 1970 for decks, retaining walls, garages and carports, additions, storage buildings, pools, and modular and mobile homes. For all of these construction scenarios, plans are forwarded to the Records Center as soon as the permit is issued. The associated permit is then forwarded to the Records Center once the inspection phase is completed.

**COMMERCIAL:** For commercial structures, the DDES Records Center can access building permits, some plans and related review notes from various review disciplines (e.g. drainage, critical areas) back to approximately 1970.

### LAND USE PERMITS

The most commonly requested land use files are for subdivisions. On any plat or short plat, the DDES Records Center receives and stores a DDES review file after each review phase, e.g. preliminary approval, engineering review, final review, and completion of the inspection phase. Short plats can usually be retrieved for customer review within one business day. Plats, however, must be retrieved from King County Archives and retrieval may take up to a week. Customers can utilize their time most efficiently by calling the DDES Records Center ahead of time at 206-296-6696 and find out for sure when the requested files will be available.

Several other types of Land Use permits are available within the DDES Records Center: all grading permits are forwarded to the Record Center as soon as they are finalized. Conditional Use Permits are stored in the Records Center as far back as the mid 1960's, and lot line adjustments/boundary line adjustments are stored back to the late 1980's. Binding site plans are also available back to the 1970's. Customers looking to review files pertaining to the Fully Contained Communities in Redmond should contact the DDES field office at Redmond Ridge at 206-205-1449.

### OTHER RESEARCH SOURCES

DDES makes every effort to accommodate customers in their efforts to conduct research on specific parcels or permits in unincorporated King County. Customers can log onto the DDES Parcel Locator via the DDES Web page

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## **DDES PERMIT CENTER HIGHLIGHTS GREEN BUILDING AND SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING**

If you have traveled to the DDES Permit Center recently, you may have noticed flowering lavender and blue oat grass on your way into the building, or samples of cotton insulation made from recycled blue jeans and a miniature solar array in the lobby.

These features are part of the new green building display and demonstration gardens that DDES has recently installed in and around the Permit Center, providing customers with resources and information on green building and sustainable landscaping. The effort is part of DDES's collaborative efforts with the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks to promote sustainable development in unincorporated King County.

The Permit Center's green building display was constructed using salvaged materials from an existing display and includes information on green building topics such as the benefits of building green; Built Green™ and LEED™ rating systems for residential and commercial buildings; and samples of environmentally friendly materials. A rotating board highlights featured Built Green™ builders who have incorporated innovative green design and construction strategies into their projects. The display also features a laptop computer station where DDES customers can access the internet to find more detailed information online.



**The drought-resistant demonstration garden at the entrance to DDES offices in Renton.**

In the front lobby, an architectural model of an actual Built Green™ home permitted by DDES also provides a three-dimensional element and serves as evidence that green homes can also be aesthetically beautiful. The model showcases green technologies designed to decrease the negative impact buildings can have on our environment, such as alternative energy from solar panels, ground source heat pumps, and advanced framing techniques that use fewer resources.

Finally, three demonstration gardens have been installed around the DDES office building. These include a drought tolerant garden, a shade garden and a rain garden. By improving the soil and using plants suitable for unique conditions, all three gardens on this site use sustainable methods to respond to three typical Northwest landscapes: drought, shade and standing water. The gardens are low maintenance, feature native plants, promote healthy soil, minimize water use, and do not need excessive fertilizer or pesticides. Visitors are encouraged to stop by the Permit Center anytime to view the gardens and take home literature on sustainable landscaping.

**Free green building technical assistance is now available in the DDES Permit Center every Tuesday morning between 8:30-10:30 a.m., or by appointment by calling 206-263-6037.**

## **WELCOME TO THE DDES RECORDS CENTER, CONTINUED**

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at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes). Simply click on PROPERTY RESEARCH and then on GIS PROPERTY SEARCH: PARCEL LOCATOR. This on line service provides zoning, district and property tax information, as well as links to permit and code enforcement histories on all parcels in unincorporated King County. The permit and code enforcement information is complete with the lead DDES staff person and their phone number.

**For questions or additional information about the DDES Records Center or property research methods offered by DDES, please contact Paula Adams, DDES Communications Director at 206-296-6682.**

## BURN BAN IN EFFECT FOR UNINCORPORATED KING COUNTY

### DDES ALSO OFFERS FREE PERMITS FOR SOME HOME FIRE SAFETY CLEARING

**BURN BAN:** The King County Fire Marshal's Office, in conjunction with the King County Fire Chiefs Association, issued a burn ban effective this past May. The burn ban is issued for all of unincorporated King County (areas outside the jurisdiction of local cities).

The burn ban does not include cooking or recreational activities. However, burning yard debris and other large combustibles is prohibited as long as the burn ban is in effect. For information regarding these types of activities or for questions regarding burning permits, please contact your local fire district or fire department.

Citizens in the unincorporated area can track when the burn ban will be lifted by logging on to the DDES Web site at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes). Simply click on FIRE MARSHAL.

**ADDITIONAL FIRE SAFETY TIPS:** The King County Fire Marshal's Office, in partnership with the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, has published a brochure on fire safety tips for rural homeowners to help guard against damage from wildfires. The brochure offers strategies and guidance on trimming and clearing yard foliage for the purposes of developing a defensible space around homes. The brochure also advises on fire resistant construction methods and landscaping techniques, as well as home disaster planning. This brochure is available via the DDES Web site at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes). Simply click on FIRE MARSHAL.

**FREE DDES PERMITS FOR DEFENSIBLE SPACE:** The first 30 feet around homes and other structures is referred to as the defensible space. This area is often landscaped. Managing foliage within a landscaped area never requires a permit. **If, however, a property owner is managing native vegetation within the defensible space, a DDES permit may be required. DDES issues such permits free of charge. Interested property owners can call DDES Site Development Services at 206-296-6759 or apply on line via the DDES Web page at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes).**

For additional information, contact DDES Communications Director Paula Adams at 206-296-6682.



Matt Caskey of the Land Use Services Division issuing a permit to a DDES customer.

## PERFORMANCE AUDIT CONCLUDES INCREASED EFFICIENCY FOR DDES

A 2004 performance audit, conducted by the King County Auditor's Office, observed clear increases in permit processing efficiency for DDES. First, the audit looked at the average number of permits reviewed per each DDES staff member. The audit found that permit reviews per staff member increased from 193 in 2000 to 221 in 2003, or 15 percent. In 2004, that number increased by an additional 25 percent over the 2003 number to 279 permits worked per DDES staff member. Higher than expected demand in 2004 led to this dramatic increase in permits processed.

This same audit looked at yet another measure of permit processing efficiency: the actual number of hours spent reviewing each permit application. Overall, the average annual number of hours per permit review decreased by 16 percent, from 8.9 hours in 2000 to 7.5 hours in 2003. The trend continued into 2004, where the average number of hours spent reviewing each permit application dropped an additional 2.66 hours, or 35 percent. The significant decreases are due to the 2004 increase in permit application volume and the department's effort to absorb workload spikes with existing staffing levels.

DDES continues to prioritize quality customer service and efficiencies in permit processing. **To review the Auditor's review of DDES permit processing efficiency in its entirety, please contact Greg Anderson, DDES Analysis and Internal Services Supervisor, at 206-296-7130.**



## NO-COST PRE-APPLICATION MEETINGS AVAILABLE FOR PROJECTS USING FARM AND RURAL STEWARDSHIP PLANS

**N**o-cost pre-application meetings are now being offered to permit customers who intend to include a Farm Plan or Rural Stewardship Plan with their building permit application. A pre-application meeting is an opportunity to sit down with DDES staff to discuss a particular proposal prior to submitting a permit application. This can be useful whether you are in the early planning stages, or nearly ready to submit an application. Development issues such as access, site drainage, or fire and life safety requirements can be discussed, as well as potential review fees.

**To request a pre-application meeting for a building permit associated with a Farm or Rural Stewardship Plan, contact Julie Kubota in the DDES Building Services Division at 206-296-7245.**

**DEVELOPING A FARM OR RURAL STEWARDSHIP PLAN:** Because one type of land regulation does not always fit every property, King County's Critical Areas Ordinance provides options for flexibility. Landowners have the option to pursue a Rural Stewardship Plan or a Farm Plan depending on their own land use goals and zoning. Both Rural Stewardship and Farm Management Planning offer some flexibility from standard critical areas protections in exchange for the long term commitment to ongoing land management actions.



No-cost pre-application meetings are now being offered to permit customers who intend to include a Farm Plan or Rural Stewardship Plan with their building permit application.

In addition to free pre-application meetings at DDES, free technical assistance is available for both Farm Planning and Rural Stewardship planning. Farm Planners with the King Conservation District produce Farm Plans for agricultural landowners and can be reached at 425-277-5581. King County stewards help landowners produce their own Forest and Rural Stewardship Plans. For information on Rural Stewardship Planning, contact Katy Vanderpool in the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks at 206-296-8362.

## NEW SERVICES AVAILABLE ON THE DDES WEB SITE

**I**n an ongoing effort bring as much convenience as possible to permit customers in unincorporated King County, DDES has recently added several new services to our web site at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes). These include:

### **SCHEDULE A BUILDING INSPECTION ON LINE:**

In November, 2004, DDES activated an automated telephone answering system allowing permit customers to schedule or cancel building inspections, and also check inspection results 24 hours, 7 days per week. This service has now been added to the DDES Web site, allowing permit holders to manage their building inspections from a laptop or home computer. From the main DDES Web page at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes), simply click on PERMIT INFORMATION, then on BUILDING INSPECTIONS.

When using this new service, be sure to have your permit number on hand. Inspection requests received before 3

p.m. on a workday can be scheduled for inspection the following work day.

### **APPLY FOR BLACKBERRY CLEARING PERMITS:**

Removal of large areas of blackberries (7,000 square feet or more) in unincorporated King County can be done with a free permit from DDES. This permit can now be applied for on line.

The new permitting process for blackberry clearing simply requires the property owner to describe the proposed project and when the work will be performed. DDES then issues a permit to the property owner free of charge. The permit, along with a list of required best management practices is mailed within one business day.

Blackberry clearing permits can be applied for via the

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## QUESTIONS – JUST ASK US

### DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

#### Director

Stephanie Warden ..... 206-296-6700

#### Communications Director

(media relations, publications, web content, customer service)

Paula Adams ..... 206-296-6682

### ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

#### Division Director

Jim Schaber ..... 206-296-6684

#### Finance Management Supervisor

(billing procedures and practices)

Elaine Gregory ..... 206-296-7139

#### Information Systems Supervisor

Michael Pahl ..... 206-296-6706

#### Analysis and Internal Services Supervisor

Greg Anderson ..... 206-296-7130

#### Human Resources Supervisor

Kathy Graves ..... 206-296-6725

### BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION

#### Division Director

Mike Dykeman ..... 206-296-6761

#### Intake and Screening Supervisor

(permit applications)

Chris Ricketts ..... 206-296-6750

#### Technical Screening/Building Review Supervisor

Pamela Dhanapal ..... 206-296-6731

#### Building Inspections Supervisor

(residential and commercial structures)

Bernard Moore ..... 206-296-6762

#### Site Engineering and Planning Supervisor

(drainage review, parking, traffic, landscaping)

Jim Chan ..... 206-296-6740

#### Fire Marshal

(inspections, fire investigations, fire system permits)

Jim Rankin ..... 206-296-7071

### LAND USE SERVICES DIVISION

#### Division Director

Joe Miles ..... 206-296-7179

#### Engineering Review Supervisor

(final plats and short plats, lot line adjustments)

Jim Sanders ..... 206-296-7178

#### Current Planning Supervisor

(preliminary plat and short plats, SEPA, EIS, CUPs, shoreline permits)

Lisa Dinsmore ..... 206-296-7171

#### Site Development Services Supervisor

(clearing, grading and forestry permits)

Randy Sandin ..... 206-296-6778

#### Critical Areas Supervisor

(wetlands, streams, geo hazards)

Steve Botthheim ..... 206-296-7144

#### Land Use Inspections Supervisor

(site infrastructure)

Steve Townsend ..... 206-296-7204

#### Code Enforcement Supervisor

(building, environmental and health hazard complaints)

Elizabeth Deraitus ..... 206-296-7090

### CUSTOMER SERVICE NUMBERS

DDES Customer Information Line ..... 206-296-6600

Permit Application Appointments ..... 206-296-6797

DDES Billing Hot Line ..... 206-296-6659



Donna Lund of the Administrative Services Division is responsible for programming the DDES Web site.

## NEW SERVICES AVAILABLE ON THE DDES WEB SITE, CONTINUED

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DDES Web site at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes). Simply click on PERMIT INFORMATION, then on ON-LINE PERMIT APPLICATIONS, then FREE BLACKBERRY CLEARING PERMITS.

### APPLY FOR FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION

**PERMITS:** DDES issues these no-cost permits for vegetation removal to reduce fire hazards around rural residential homes. (See burn ban article on page 6.) From the main DDES Web site at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes), simply click on PERMIT INFORMATION, then on ON-LINE PERMIT APPLICATIONS, then FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION PERMITS.

**For additional information on services offered through the DDES Web site, please contact Paula Adams at 206-296-6682.**



**King County**

Department of Development and Environmental Services

## QUARTERLY NEWS

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